**Gathering of Deacons and Lay Ministers**

**Friday, August 25, 2017**

**Small Group Discussion Feedback - Raw Feedback**

**What do you hope for, as you look to the future in your ministry?**

* Greater Collaboration in the Church
  + Viewing ourselves as CHURCH
* Building culture among merging/clustering parishes
  + Building relationships first
* Strong, healthy team
* Fun to work together as a team
* Hopeful in the future of leadership
* Teamwork, we all work together (and need to work together)
* Better communication
* More volunteers with so many ministries
* Networking and helping with mission work
* More volunteers who are capable and willing
* Schools - some are separate from the parish now
* Expectations of parishioners is high - we need high quality ministers
* Continued education of parishioners on the role of lay ministers
  + Have shared Parish Director
  + Priest just sacraments
* What our roles are - priests’ roles are changing also to “assisting Priest”
* How do I build a Catholic community?
* Look forward to more technology, apps, websites etc. for reaching everyone and anyone
* Technology
* Relationship between staff, parishioners and priests as Christ intended us to have as a community
* Work together not just building up one parish, but as a whole
* Not having the tension of competitiveness. That we are one Church
* Leadership and communication
* People will see the bigger “Church” vs. parish
* Excitement over the bigger role of the laity. See the positives
* Fresh starts - again, see as positive
* Greater team/mission development - leading into the future
* Possibilities among big change - letting people feel a part of something
* Continued collaboration with parishes, pastors and staff
* Relationship building opportunities
* Financial stability/security in merging school systems
* Parishioners support collaborative efforts and embrace the change
* More resources and better use of current resources
* Feed people spiritually so they connect with their faith and want to become involved in faith community, and feel responsible for the support and mission of the Church
* Deacons to become the bridge from where we are to where we need to be
* Meeting families where they are - helping them make faith practices a part of their lives
* Better understanding/communication of the diaconate
* Less conflict
* Outreach
* Sense of anti-parochialism
* We keep parish offices open
* People realize why they are there
* Raise our understanding of discipleship
* Unity, not division
* Continuity
* Better communication between lay volunteers and staff/pastor
* Deadlines are not suggestions
* Archdiocese support is extremely important. Help us to know who’s driving the engine
* Steadiness (not inflexible/unchangeable, but high-quality expectations; should be clear whether a new hire knows parish history or not)
* Communicate roles more clearly, especially in collaborating parishes and not just on paper, but in a culturally sensitive, personal way, a meeting where all parties are present
* Simplify the mission - “Make disciples.” no more manuals nor mission statements
* Bring the Youth back to Church! How?
* There is timidity among new parishioners. They want to know if this is going to remain their parish, or if things around here are going to be changing yet again
* Less parish focused and more outward focused
* Improved communication with parishioners
* Better communication and greater stewardship (x2)
* Improved catechism in Spanish
* Strength in numbers - in service, advocacy and charity
* Recruit and invite people to ordained and lay ministries
* Better formation for all individuals and families in Spanish
* Collaborating with our cluster parish/neighbor
* See more support from the archdiocese in lay formation, training the next generation
* How do we serve the Catholic community around us and not just our 1-2 parishes
* That we would include other faiths in our outreach
* Religious Ed ahead in collaboration - comment of significance
* Increased attendance: “full churches”
* Address lack of young people present in the parish
* What is clustering, collaborating, merging - need to define - parishioners are sensitive to the verbage
* “Destination” parishes with parishioner mobility
* Parishioners facing fears of change - look at changes as opportunities
* Become more visionary parishes and address identity issue - how can separate identity parishes work together - “Family of Faces”
* Issue of geography in attempts to cluster, e.g. Racine - 3 in city, one outside of city
* More collaboration
  + Lunch with administrative assistants at different parishes, want more for other staffs
  + Collaboration with staffs of different parishes
  + Way of the future; not good to be isolated
* Expand my role, such as parish director
* 2 parishes can collaborate without tension of who is going to dominate and personal role in helping with this
* Staff of 2 parishes are getting on the same page - getting to know each other personally and professionally
* Making disciples is a great focus - glad the language is more normative now, focusing on what’s central
* Working with other Christian denominations throughout the state on Alpha to bring people to Christ
* Growing our Church, becoming stronger
* More of a belonging to our Church
* To journey with community from grief through reintegration to Resurrection
* Increase role that music plays in liturgical life
* Increasing number of persons participating in the liturgy
* Grow an increase of liturgical participation despite busy family life/activities
* Better communication and unity of mission within parish
  + Staff and deacons know what each other is doing
* Opportunities for growth (individual formation in faith and ministry)
* Opportunities for individual and community growth
* Simplicity of mission
* More help with translating sacramental catechesis for Spanish families
* More assistance with various cultures
* Parishioners have confidence in ministries
* Build off 2020 plan - will continue to evolve
* Not so much put on one individual. Lots of stress. Hope to empower more volunteers. Titles may be singular, but in reality, doing much more. Lots of burnout
* Staff/parishioners are united to live the mission, practice habits of discipleship….leads to deeper relationships with Christ and community, leads to transformation, rethinking, reaching out
* To bring together separate roles in cluster parishes (for some things, i.e. DRE and DRE in multiple parishes)
* One full staff. This may be geographically difficult. Spread out/locations
* When will we have women deacons?
* Hospital chaplains: priests lived in parish houses. Where do we go to get a priest for anointing? Can there be anointing privileges for others than priests? There can be forgiveness of intention
* Emphasis on communication among parishioners, pastor and staff - continual
* Direction to Pastoral Council to help with being on board. We need their leadership as well
* Actions come out of commitment not convenience. We need their (Pastoral Council?) buy-in. Need to let go of what they have known. There is a resurrection in this experience
* Communication from the Arch to parishes about where we are going from here with leadership so there can be forward planning (mission) without guessing
* Growing understanding/formation in hispanic and cultural/immigration issues with pastoral staff as demographics change to be able to adequately minister to
* Giving back priests their primary pastoral role and relieving them of the management (not CEOs)
* Giving youth/millennials the authentic teachings so that they stay rooted in the faith
* How do we keep the teens and mold them into our future leaders
* Open lines of communication between parishes that are clustering
* Focusing everyone on our mission
* Ongoing professional formation of lay leadership
* Maintaining standards when we are split
* Better role clarity
* Increased opportunity to help children grow in the faith through lectio and corporal works of mercy
* Successful integration of Anglo/Latino communities
* Get more youth involved
* Support staff to help pastoral staff
* Families involved
* Collaboration between parishes getting better
* Get liturgy/music more together - consistent
* People feel welcome
* Community come to church, all welcome, all worthy
  + Narrow gate
* As staff move away - health of spirit, mind and body continues with parish health/ministry
* Time for improvement, visioning and staff prayer
* Goal for all: healthy, happy and holy
* Time for constant growth - ministry and personal prayer
* Hope to move beyond current ministries and extend to larger community - while feeling uncomfortable - Christ calling us beyond
* Leave a legacy to invite others to join ministry
* I hope that everyone can work with the people that I have been able to work with. The parishes and people we have clustered with have been really good and we work really well together. It is because we work so well together that we have been able to hire a shared minister and we are very hopeful for what the possibilities are. Other ministries are also looking to collaborate because we want it to, not because someone from up above, but because the people want it to happen. There is a great energy in the people that are in place and ministry to the Hispanic community is growing
* Youth ministry: teen volunteering, willingly; idea of collaboration (10 Kenosha churches) is exciting and encouraging
* Cannot get volunteers (clustering might provide more candidates)
* Share the idea of collaboration with more of the parish members; idea is not talked about; need for more planning and communication
* Relief the stigma of the words “cluster, et”
* Tools to be able to communicate the vision of merging
* Timing of this communication should not be on a Friday at 4:30
* Offering workshops when more parishes are free; avoid conflicts with the parishes’ calendar
* How to reach the parish members that aren’t receiving catholic formation
* How to merge the identities of merging parishes; help each parish involved in the merger feel welcome and valued
* How to get feedback from parish members that are on the outskirts
* How to provide parish-level workshops to provide the information we receive at archdiocesan workshops
* Why is *my* parish closing and not *theirs*?
* Can’t implement synod expectations in one year; need more time; don’t introduce new direction before the original direction hasn’t been instituted yet
* Hiring more lay ministers requires just pay; if we can’t pay people, how else can we value them?
* Formal and valuable training to offer newly confirmed seniors in high school that can be put on resume
* Have youth on pastoral council
* Stronger lay leadership (work together with Pastors not top-down)
* WORK TOGETHER and COLLABORATING (staff, lay, pastor, parishioners, etc.) TEAM WORK!
* Relationships with people – continuing missions with
* Next steps positive in Arch
* More engagement of Pastoral Councils with ppl – not just meetings – represent and be example to the parishioners
* Being excited – go out into neighborhood – bringing new parishioners and neighbors into our community “entity”
* Mix of old and new identities
* Unity of the people
* Leadership balances
* Allow each leader to successfully “do their job” for the betterment of the Parish TEAM
* Re-FOCUS on Ministry to People in any role/job
* That new priests see Parish Directors as equal and partners in parish operations
* Responsibility but without authority
* Musicians and Liturgists - as parishes collaborate or merge, there needs to be an openness to the differences of cultures. Changes need to be gradual not instant
* More collaboration between ordained and laity. Formation of laity is needed
* To be able to follow his journey as a deacon with the collaboration with pastor and future pastors
* To be able to incorporate people into outreach ministries that are currently filled by senior parishioners
* To have children put God before sports, when it comes to formation
* Inspire, install a sense/need of volunteerism
* As parishes grow together, as leaders that we stay focused on the needs of the parish and all that involves
* Administrative process and procedures sometimes dominate the needs of parishioners
* New models - more volunteers, not always relying on the staff
* Be there when the people are there
* Why do we not have staff on weekends when the people are there and need us
* How do we blend various cultures from different parishes without bickering or divisiveness
* Cohesive plan for ministries and procedures
* Blend cultures together is a difficult challenge
* Pastor can make a big difference
* Language barrier is a problem
* Keep some specific uniqueness, but we are sharing more and more. We have a long way to go
* Make the transition as joyful as possible
* Hoping for respect among pastor, staff and all
* Pastor has to be “Pastor” to all and can’t have favorites
* Reaching out and excitement, as well as fear
* Rather be hopeful
* Church of us, not us and them. Day when we are one church
* Want average Catholic of having better understanding of diaconate
* Ok and important to have parishes focused on different aspect/ministry/outreach
  + Ex. St. X has adoration, St. Y doesn’t, but has strong social outreach focus, St. Z has a vibrant youth ministry - utilize that
* 20s/30s are very willing/wanting to be involved in outreach, social justice issues/causes
* Modeling of Pope Francis
* As we continue working together, that we are realizing that we are all in this together
* Lay leaders understand/”own” our ministry making things easier for priests
* Parishioners views are different that we thought - community culture more openness from laity (parish)
* What is the opportunity? Hard for parishioners to see benefits while still holding onto the past
* Don’t want to lose identity. Hard to find new identity
* Who’s taking the place as pillars of the parish die off? Commitment to parish, time, finances are eroding. Giving because of trust
* Good to hear different voices, blended
* Take the strengths/the good and sharing it - moving forward. See where we are the same - share
* Hopefully - joint meetings - led pastoral councils become more effective, more visionary - how to live out
* Forced priests to be more focused. Support staff to be more effective, more effective leaders
* Happy to serve another parish (deacon)
* Collaborate with schools and religious education
* Support strengths, let others go. Formation for lay leadership together - more insight
* Letting it fail to come up with a better idea - evangelization, discipleship
* Demanding the best - driving the best be better prepared
* People want good things for their kids, go to things that are good
* More effective Church - positive. Something failed - learn from mistakes. Tried - didn’t work, reason why (pruning)
* Make things worthwhile
* Reaching out - know our faith better to reach out
* Same issues across the Church - more people to serve, more gifts, more outreach, more resources
* More collaboration between the cluster
* More laity/volunteers to serve ministries
* Streamlining of the finances - that parish members are supportive
* That there is an eye kept on the Ministry of Jesus Christ as we navigate the administrative evolution
* Hope that the positives lift us up in these model shifts
* That the parishioners will understand what “Church” is
* That pastoral assignments will reflect need
* Hope parishioners are happy - parish is growing instead of diminishing
* Staff continues to establish a mutual respect, a “connection” so we can better lead our parishioners
* People are adjusting to “no pastor” but a “sacramental dispenser”
* Establishing an effective leadership team with a deacon in charge or leading the way
* Education for leadership - people need to be educated on their role of pastoral vs. administrative
* Hope for our parishes to become more “relationship” based
* Hope for good pastoral team leadership to help parishioners work together
* That 2 communities can find that relationship with Jesus Christ to be able to work together
* Music ministry - that everyone has at their core to have a heart for service
* DAS - simplicity in reporting who to, and with all the changes (insurance and safeguarding are on the top of parish changes and stressors)
* Deacon - who will follow me as retirement comes, and cover ministries?
* Improve communication - better understand and utilize communication platforms
* DRE - better communication - collaborate - more will come if you invite the other parish, but many don’t want to deviate from the silo mentality and don’t want to change - hope for a better relationship
* Sharing programming and sites in a cluster potential - things had gotten stagnant - how to get a fresh look and how to draw more people in by more joyful liturgies
* Sidebar: What do you want to do? What needs to be done? Break up tasks based on gifts and strengths, attack the list from that perspective! When we did, it went well!
* There already is a good relationship between our parishes
* Either/or vs. both/and - don’t lose the population you have by changing to much with either/or. Use both/and - some of each rather than one way and it’s the only way
* How to build trust when a large parish clusters with a small parish
* How to make a small parish feel at home in a large parish - use small groups in existence and bring that culture to the small parish
* Ways to bring families and lost in - “fallen away”
* Caledonia parish - disintegration movement/new priest/bring skills to the table/gather communities together - challenging times
* Working with staff can be supportive to any priest that comes in; allow priest to do what he does best. Parishioners want to see him
* More DAS’ think like Celia Meyers does as a DAS - she’s a support person to everyone else. For parishioners and staff alike
* Making things work out with parishes with the loss of youth minister
* Adjustments among three parishes are in process - hope it goes well. Acting separately right now. Human Concerns do the best as a tri-parish so far. Shifting role from liturgist to pastoral associate
* Outreach is another way for parishes to connect - unifying!
* Summer reading program offered and helpful to get parishioners engaged
* Process of how we get information out and received - how to communicate better. How should I have known that something is available like the summer reading program?
* Christian Formation is invited and made to be part of the parish - we still feel separated
* We look at where people are now, and stay with them on their journey
* Our hope is that we as lay ministers/leadership, can empower parishioners to pass on the faith, and also encourage ALL of us to treat what we do as a vocation
* Moving families to make their faith life a priority. Also have to understand that we can’t save everyone - they have to choose to follow and join
* A sense of hope and mission
* Parish directing itself toward mission, Christ and not fear
* Communication through change and collaboration to build community
* We are a part of something bigger
* Go out and beyond the Church, not inward focus - outreach, love of the poor
* Empowering laity
* Collaboration to build one Church
* LOVE, reach out through love
* Lifting up the staff we work with, to remember it is a gift to work in ministry
* Recognizing that everything we do and say with staff reflects the mission
* Manage staff so they can work together, and walk together, be given leadership that works towards collaboration among staff
* Healing for those in pain of “losing” parish
* Evangelizing within the parish to go out into the world and create disciples
* Relationship; working together bringing Christ
* Goal to have a smooth transition to lead people to Christ (combining a large parish with small)
* Trying to bring it all together - helping kids from non-Catholic background, willing to
* Stasis and growth; path to growth; forming intentional relationships; creating welcoming; fostering community
* Bring together multiple people - collaboration of efforts; what works and not - sharing among each other
* Racine - collaboration with tension, need good communication, and need to know why money is being spent
* Cultivate disciples - deepen relationships and curiosity; create stability to serve and feed kids; to create deeper relationship
* Growth and active participation
* Not just going to Mass
* Opportunities to be fed
* Sharing resources between shared parishes
  + Culturally acceptable
* Being a welcoming parish
* More participation by laity
* Larger role for lay people
* People to see the world beyond our parish boundaries
* Accountability of pastors and staff (i.e. behaviors and difficulties)
* Return of parishioners to parish (more participation)
* Young adults want to be Catholic but don’t know where to be fed
* Hope in the young Church
* Better working relationship between staff and parish committees (more the approach - can we get more direction and guidance regarding?)
* Better guidelines for clustering, i.e. faith for the formation funds, canon law, more parish aware of provisions
* Communication - defining roles. They had little communication after the clustering happened. Dealing with 3 Finance Councils, etc. Only one full-time pastor and DRE for all three. DRE caught in the middle, and needs correct information
* When new pastor and staff = good can come in and learn what is needed, but don’t know all the secrets when previously had long-term pastor and staff
* Need new people/parishioners to step up, do they really feel welcome or the need to do? How to help people realize it is their own call. Some shared and some other ministries are not
* How to communicate with a shared pastor is not too busy - priest is available, but people are afraid of usurping his time

**What are you worried about, in your ministry?**

* Friction
* Competition between parishes involved in mergers and collaborations
* Are people going to be known? Or get lost in the merger?
* Will a pastor naturally favor one parish more?
* Culture clashing, especially among parish leadership between parishes
* Communicating effectively between parishes
* Not getting a priest and receiving a parish director
* More diversified in Spanish
* Number of senior members who are dying, and the money is not coming in
* Catholic school teachers are not volunteering or serving in Church
* Priests are not available
* Retiring priests
* Clustering affected
* Our Pope leads us now - we shouldn’t worry
* Consult people in Church and outside of Church
* Go Out **-** become missionaries
* Discipleship and Missionaries
* Consultation - ask people
* Culture worries - recognize all cultures
* Respect our cultures
* Parish is a family
* Scripture is important; not so much structure
* Catechesis is important and formation
* No understanding of advocacy
* Stress of priests will affect my job
* Sharing of priests
* Loss of jobs
* Reaching the communities with a combined staff
* Having five churches not as strong. But having one church that is strong. Why can’t they merge? We are stretching people by having them do so many things
* How do you keep merging parishes that have already been merged?
* Dealing with debt and job security
* Who will take over/continue the work and vision?
* Lack of volunteers
* Lack of understanding of the priest shortage and how the laity is needed for the future
* The role of the laity, and how important it is
* How to empower the laity and volunteers
* Being told by the arch what to do vs. having a voice in the decision
* Increased demands on time - burnout!
* Budgets/Finance
* Lack of priests and deacons
* `Lack of knowledge of priest and deacon responsibilities
* Families in formation are dwindling - not about the numbers about the lack of a faith foundation for children navigating the world in which we live
* Worried about the Church as a whole
* Too many things to do - too little time in which to do it
* Parishes working together to share resources during meetings, parish collaborations, sharing staff and programs
* The busy-ness of Church business overrides the mission of the Church
* Empowering and equipping others to spread the faith
* Conflict
* Worry that there won’t be change - we talk, nothing changes
* Overworked if two positions are eliminated (secretary)
* Parishioners will resist change
* People won’t discern, they’ll just take the low-road and won’t consider possibilities
* Declining membership
* One size doesn’t fit all/lack of transparency
* Lack of vision
* Priest variety. As human men, they have different ways of doing things, different processes for decision making, often rigid, conservative and difficult to work with, pushing Latin and chant over other choices. They are so different from how the parishioners see the Church and want the Church to be
* \*\*Friction between priests is visible and unsettling to so many who witness it\*\*
* Parishioner church-hopping. They’re searching for the right priest and a place to be fed. Priest burnout is so painfully obvious. Do they want the role any longer?
* Should there be more priest evaluations? Can we trust the Seminary and coach priests/seminarians out of this vocation?
* We remain hopeful!!! We trust this process to produce results!!!
* Some pessimism about whether the Archbishop already has a plan and this listening session is for show
* Unhealthy competition between Catholic schools and faith formation programs. Must continue to respect what each does and what each family chooses
* We’re here to serve your vision. Tell the truth about what it is. Don’t pander to us. Don’t pretend you care what we think if you don’t
* Spirit-driven message speaks for itself. Don’t make us “drink the Kool-Aid”
* Non-Catholics working as staff members is problematic.
* Non-practicing Catholics working as staff members is also problematic
* Some bitterness present
* Clustering may be preventing personal relationships. Priest are too busy doing many Masses far apart and don’t have time for mingling/loving parishioners. Some speed to Mass (tickets!) and seem so rushed and unhealthy
* DON’T follow the business model “Do more with less!”
* DO NOT imitate the world! Let the world imitate us! Be human and have realistic human expectations!
* “If the devil can’t make you bad, he’ll make you busy!” Pastors shouldn’t make excuses. We’re all busy! “Smell like sheep!”
* Communication issues persistent. What happens in a Parish Council meeting must be communicated to staff and parish
* With families - possibility that we are losing some of our families in our structural changes; so perhaps a lack of understanding and they may leave to go to another parish or cluster
* Can always use more deacons
* That we involve parishioners in all these discussions, for ownership
* People are accepting better integration of Spanish and English formation for children and youth
* Demographics of Church - where are young people, young adults and kids?
* Type of leadership at the parish - parishioners are writing to the Archbishop
* Under a shared pastor could there be a shared parish director for administrative purposes
* Address shortage of lay ministers who are trained well
* How do we address “worries” of our parishioners?
* Scared of quality of our priests coming out of this seminary (not a collaborative mindset; ultra-conservative)
* Six parishioners collaborating in religious ed - specific mention of Bay View - become one/two parishes in collaboration
* Attracting the non-churched, non-Catholic neighbors - curriculum for non-Catholics in schools
* Collaboration - where one parish is financially stronger, need to share resources
* Fear of what relationship will be in merged parishes - red collar/blue collar, how will they relate
* Again, need to share resources, e.g. success of Catholic East Schools
* Look at deaneries for support in collaboration
* Reach out to other parishes through deaneries - avoid the situation of the central city mergers
* Address fears with: let Jesus Christ be known and loved
* Creating mission statements: don’t do it
* Rural community biases for other ethnic groups
* In several communities your family history is the Church history - “we bought this pew.” Can’t sell Church property
* Difficulty of collaboration - fear, territorial, jobs eliminated, we’re human!, will take strong leadership to overcome
* Know leadership will be changing in a year - priest retiring, but don’t know in what direction, how that will affect our momentum/what we’re doing now
* Consolidation - merging of offices, losing staff, changing staff
* Resistance of parishioners to collaboration
* Declining membership in churches. What are the answers to attract people? Step outside walls of parish with pastoral ministers
* Division between participating in Religious Ed vs. participating in Church
* Speaker underestimated the effect of the sexual abuse scandal on the Church
* Lack of pastoral leadership - ministers (priests) are not present, not invested in relationships
* If parishes don’t combine staffs, leaders often have to go to more meetings
* Taking a priest at one parish and adding a second parish - they really should get a whole new priest for both parishes
* Parishioners have to learn to be less dependent on the priest
* Lack of parish volunteers, especially in the younger generation. Are younger folks coming back or not
* Folks not getting married in Church - maybe for financial reasons
* Decline in contributions - jobs that are family supporting for lay staffs
* Revenue sharing among parishes in the diocese - some have million dollar renovations and some can’t fix the roof
* Taking priests to teach in Seminary
* Understanding priests with accents, different cultures, also working for such priests
* Worries of emotional, spiritual and physical health of priests
* Added responsibilities that diocesan priests are needing to take on
* Worried about diocesan priests being overwhelmed with clustering/collaboration
* Fear that some parishes are set up for failure by resisting collaboration/clustering
* Worries about pastors strong enough to handle strong parish personalities as a community
* Worries of some parishes doing “everything as usual”
* Loss of people leaving. School closings. Results in less volunteers
* Decline in offertory. Not always a result of less folks
* People who want to run the place and voice isn’t responded to - stop giving
* How will we shift focus on outreach?
* Spread so thin across 3 parishes. Not conducive to developing relationships. How do we adapt/adjust to what different generations need in terms of relationship?
* Not a lot of qualified or interested people to fill roles of leadership in the church. People seem to be puzzled as to why this is
* Younger folks need full-time positions, not part-time, to support themselves
* Not planning based on mission. Planning based on budget $. No money left after needs. Not investing in development position to raise $. Rethink how we do stewardship
* Succession planning - no young people following/stepping up to take leadership roles
* Don’t know how to really connect with a pastor/parishioners who really don’t want to work together
* Priest identity dis-allows people from living out their ministry. People want to grow spiritually, we must let them
* Large parish has not merged but has clustered. Will we have enough fill-ins? Communication line needs to be open
* Smaller churches feel like they will be absorbed. Their input is not considered. Clustering leads to changes but can be a blessing, a convenience for parishioners
* Fear of parishes closing
* Catechesis in youth - with the family is difficult and lacking (getting them in the door outside of sacramental preparation)
* That we are always ministering to the common denominator - not able to take the parish member who is ready to go deeper
* When there is turnover of staff/transition of priest, that it can be a few steps back for the parish - there lacks “on the job” training/”onboarding”
* Resistance of priests to allow deacons to function in their ministerial roles
  + Formation to the seminarians about the role of the permanent deacon
* Need for more deacons (5 years is daunting)
* Diversity of race and sex/gender at the table
* Engagement
* Keeping priests happy, healthy and holy
* That the idea of building a “new Church” means abandonment of history
* Overlooking the retired sector in favor of younger members
* As the older generations pass how do we work with younger generations to keep the Church going?
* Are we caring for all people in every stage?
* Too few people wearing too many hats
* People coming from Madison diocese to western Milwaukee Archdiocese
* How to get people where they are at
* Time, only work part-time, to get things done
* Not burning out in the last years of ministry until retirement
* Dump on lay staff
* Will there be qualified lay persons to carry on, lay staff changing all the time
* Little things change - how to explain to people
* Balance, work (deacons), health, family
* Not a worrier - change is an opportunity to be grounded in faith, leads to vision of opportunity
* Proactive in communication
  + Lack of teams
  + Need a leader to coordinate
* Overburdening of staff - increase growth with same/less staff
* Balance in life
* Use God’s grace/guidance every day
* Curiosity - next wave of teen/young adults - how are they being invited in/engaged to continue involvement
* How do we develop future leaders
* There is a fear among some in the Hispanic community that they are being rejected and stared at by the white parishioners. There was some resistance to bilingual Masses at first among the white parishioners at first but eventually they grew to really like it
* Finding catechists is always a challenge
* Parish has changed dramatically in the last decade or so to the point where there are no Confirmation candidates (school has become a “mission school” – primarily choice students) so they are still trying to figure out how to minister in the parish. They do have about 25 students in religious ed. Difficult to collaborate because the culture is so different
* We definitely notice when school is in session versus when it is not. Attendance is down. We are more of a destination parish, not a neighborhood parish – don’t have whole families…we have people from every zip code in the area. Cross-section of every age group, ethnic group, socio-economic background
* How to reach the millennials
  + Different work ethic
* In transition: who decides what parish leadership model is best for your parish?
* How to help lay staff adjust to role sharing when parishes come together; how can we better help lay staff when their job description changes; things often change with poor communication
* Lay input in the priest placement process; laity doesn’t feel they are even being heard. They feel that the decision has already been made before even being brought to the parish level
* Our leadership needs to reflect the demographic of our community; and need to effectively communicate and receive the input of all members of the archdiocese
* Different possibility of paarish ministries and staff
* Concern about what my job will be in 3-4 years. Is it secure?
* If parishes are sharing resources, will there be jobs for people? Less positions, more people
* What is the first thing to be cut?
* Try to look at the bigger picture!
* Communication - staying connected. Share!
* Concerned about emotional stability of pastors because we are expecting them to pastor multiple parishes instead of closing them and making it easier for them
* Archdiocesan support of priests seems to be lacking
* Make certain that our spiritual leaders are taken care of and supported
* Archdiocese needs to enforce leadershp to close parishes when necessary instead of working the priest to death
* Let go of administrative stuff so he can be the pastor
* Families getting to point of “I can’t give any more.” When numbers increase and $ decrease
* Parents want children to “get” sacraments - will pay for that, but not willing to financially support parish as a whole
* Concern schools are a drain on parishes
* Pastors too stressed about finances/administration issues to have time/energy to spend in “real” ministry
* Priest morale
* Not all priests are best at pastoral matters, not all priests are best at administration - recognize which are which and focus on his strengths and not force them all to do all things
* Some of the newer (young) priests are trying to do too much to bring people/parishes together. They are not ready to be pastors/administrators (about 3-4 years out of Seminary)
* That the pastors assigned to collaborations are getting burned out - that it is too much
* Deacons and EC were not part of this process from the start
* Laity need to be utilized
* Justice ministry - a fair wage
* If we do not keep an eye on the Mission we will lose people
* Lack of resources - financial and staff. It’s limiting the staff
* As families see changes they use it as an excuse to leave
* Decide it’s not worth the time - because they don’t have the connection or bond
* To make less mistakes and have people mad
* Happy, Holy and Healthy - to keep this at the forefront for volunteers and staff
* To be sensitive to people's’ needs and fear of change (so as to not exclude them or hurt feelings)
* Balance of administration; oversight and desire for pastoral needs. “Can’t do everything” have to (merging 2 schools, dealing with anxiety and anger)
* Lack of confidence in parents to pass on the faith for their children
* Non Mass attendance by many families
* In the morning talk it was stated that a key component is dependent on the pastor - if a key is the pastor developing and building personal relationships, how can he do this if he struggles deeply with this himself?
* Have priests been instructed in “The Changing Face of the Church - the National Perspective?” I’m sure they have. How are they being helped with this?
* Roadblock mentality - we get in our own way. Look at how you treat your coworkers. Sometimes we treat parishioners better than each other at the parish office
* Lack of direction from pastor within a parish so as employees we don’t know which direction we go in - every staff member is new (3 years or less). Pastor new. How do we disseminate information effectively? Find common ideas?
* Consistency between older and younger parishioners for donation of their time. Consistency of new chairs. Collaboration of parishes. This is the way we always did it, use that tone! But not convenient for younger people trying to find a consistent time
* Worried for our ministries with all the changes. How can I as a DAS help them? Communication is key. I know there will be tensions, and I am worried about that.
* Loss of 4 employees in 10 days - how to deal with the reality of that
* Stewardship - volunteerism is a STRUGGLE
* Liturgical roles - feel bad for having to tell your volunteers to volunteer using guilt!
* Automated system - still need to call people
* Not enough discernment to Council - easy to hide in a large group. Pastor had to express frustration to get more discerners
* Process of how we get information out and received - how to communicate better.
* Need for many mediums - bulletin, Facebook, step announcement, TV, email blasts (sparingly) - communicate through many mediums
* One parish had a priest give a paragraph update after Mass
* Personal relationships is a medium - e.g. SVDP - networking with others. Many parishes don’t use resources they have - check in with people you have. Parishioner expertise
* Youth are important. Can’t lose youth
* Catechists/parents not understanding the purpose/importance of ongoing catechesis
* Bringing new people into ministries (music, liturgy, catechesis, etc.)
* Make time effective and rewarding for our members
* Worry that not enough people will fill roles of Eucharistic ministers/Catechists, etc. as they aren’t coming to Mass regularly
* How are we going to support employees of the parishes? They lack skills and education. High turnover of DAS especially - when ONE is having to manage three plus parishes
* How to handle resistance
* Lack of communication
* Process of grieving parish, or anger towards losing parish
* Employment - where? With whom? Am I qualified?
* Is there transparency in communication?
* Continue the focus to mission and not mission
* Will things get worse?
* Communication; miscommunication/misinterpretation
* Parish adding another parish and is also building
  + Five Masses at one parish, Two Masses at two other sites - for one pastor and one associate
  + Worried about giving good ministry without killing anyone
  + Fear about needing to meet with all of the other parishes
* Viability of putting two parishes together despite differences in parish cultures
* Keep bring together collaborating not clashing
* Change isn’t a concern - new to parish work. But concerned over staff workload and being able to cope with working together
* Expectations and human resources
* When parishes change/collaborate, do you lose people? Losing parishioners; need to do well and not lose core values
* Conceptual decisions not connecting
* Cross parish collaborating - is it working? Is it better to close parishes and have more larger parishes with (hopefully) more vibrant parishes?
* Competency in leading and making pastoral changes
* How can we give the best when we are spread so far apart
* It seems like the Arch is three steps behind the parishes, and a lot of parishes feel isolated
* Don’t have something for those that gets them excited about their faith
* Priests that are near retirement and have already checked out
* Archdiocese requires priests to stay when they are ready to retire, are sick, ready to move
* Parish is busy, but not growing in discipleship
* Committees/commissions have some members and take ownership of ministries, but no new members
* Children/teens in traveling teams - RE is not a priority
* Families not connected to the parish
* Division in the city among the Churches - difference in theology
* Not always a welcoming Church - priests saying if not in a state of grace don’t come up for communion
* Declining number of Catholics - schools, stewardship continue to trickle down
* How to get the younger parishioners who are attracted to the Mega Churches - when they become disenfranchised at those, how do we get them back?
* How do you engage after Confirmation
* Worries about their school - students migrating to larger Catholic or public schools that have more; smaller schools can meet needs of children who need a smaller school. How is the Archdiocese going to help with the struggling schools?
  + Does tuition have something to do with it? Do younger people have other priorities?
* Catholic High Schools losing identity, replacing theology with secular classes
* Is having capital campaign but doesn’t meet goal, we can’t make things come to fruition. How do you move forward with what is needed, i.e. building improvements, space, etc., if you can’t afford?
* Do religious ed students understand their formation? Is formation just as good as attending a Catholic day school?

**What kinds of resources, formation and support do you need for your ministry?**

* One individual had their school close rather abruptly and jobs cut
  + Need open and honest communication to build trust
  + Allow people to voice their fears and ideas
* We need communication (we talked about this a lot)
  + Desire timelines communicated from the Archdiocese → parish → people
  + Without timeline communications, things seem abrupt to parishioners
* Counseling to aid with transitions
* Gatherings like this one today
  + Gatherings like this at the parish level (when staff from the arch come to the parish to explain/help facilitate conversations of merger, etc.)
* Report back on best practices
* Invite families to be part of the parish
* Ongoing formation/learning from others, like at Cardinal Stritch
* We always need more
* Let everyone know what resources are available from the archdiocese
* People want formation
* Support groups
* Each parish is unique
* Don’t need Arch offices - all different
* Power from the top down
* Transparent. Be honest with everything that is going on
* Communication, explaining things
* Help with the changes that occur within the parishes
* Affordable formation. We only get paid so much
* New guidelines. Expectations need to be reasonable
* Archdiocese should offer aid to parishes that need a staff
* Tangible/physical information from arch to share along with discussion
* Info on 20-30 year olds/millennials
* Sharing/networking opportunities
* Non-work opportunities
* Support from pastor/parish director
* Leadership formation and support - parish and staff
* To be willing to think outside the box and be open to innovative thinking
* We are blessed within our Archdiocese but we need more family commitment. Many resources are available to us
* Continuous opportunities for parishioners to more fully participate in collaborative events and formation activities
* More formation available for parishioners
* People need to understand the priest's’ role is changing, and his role needs to be supported
* Efforts directed to better and more comprehensive communication and use of technology resources today
* Focus on mission
* Moral support
* Better communication between the Deacon’s Office and deacons
* Communication from arch
* Communication from parishioners
* Homilies need to be better
* Support groups
* Getting parents to interact as opposed to Facebook
* Formational development
* Leadership to help us
* Days like today! :)
* Quality presenters! :)
  + With great accents! :)
* Ongoing formation opportunities are so necessary.
* What isn’t everyone here today? Isn’t it mandatory? We’re paid to be here!
* Certification requirements still vague. Degrees are all over the board. What’s required? Give us a long heads-up
* Best practices?
* Grateful the Archdiocese is reinvesting in an online model with open chat rooms to learn more from one another
* Expand BAAM
* Formation - ongoing for lay ministers (e.g. conflict resolution, dealing with difficult people, not just “Church” topics)
* Best practices around the country in these areas
* New models and assistance from objective people/trainers outside of our staff/pastor
* We need good formation for deacons and laypeople (five prongs) and it needs to be ongoing
* Communicate larger trends happening around the country, like the speaker did today. Educate our parishioners (e.g. town hall meetings), more communication to parishioners
* It’s helpful to be able to call the Archdiocese for answers, or a referral
* Multicultural and multi-generational “vision” and assistance
* Support from our priest (pastor) and to be able to ask him directly
* Continued formation in our own parish
* Find ways to involve young people
* Share resources working at other parishes
* Support of our priests in Hispanic Ministry is helpful
* Archdiocese should support financially for training and formation (plus parishes could do this more consistently)
* From Arch - share/provide “best practices” for clustering. Connect those “who have been there” with those entering clustering
* Ongoing formation
* Spiritual directions - provide website, “Looking for a spiritual director?” with a list of names
* Better communication in all aspects of pastoral care - compassionate, kind, communications like Jesus would have done. Accurate, effective
* “We are all in this together” types of communications. Credible source of Arch communication.
* Wanting to spare people - not effective communications
* Mentors for new ministers, again on a website
* Strong Council Leaders - resources to develop this
* Amen!
* Days like today - national trends known, not alone, idea sharing
* Formation for lay staff in human, spiritual and pastoral areas especially with SFS closed for lay people
* Training for all in leadership and collaboration skills
* Collaborating parishes should have staff that meet to know one another
* Burnout prevention for all staff, not just priests. Setting limits. Boundaries. Using blocks of time - morning, afternoon, evening
* Parishioners must realize the priest is human and not available 24/7
* Succession planning for the diocese - recognizing strengths, training for the future, “promotion” possibilities, etc. With lay folks being the majority of the work force, don’t you want the best?
* More parish directors - but must go out and seek them
* Updated resources for community outreach - domestic abuse and addiction, keys for choice families/in need of help with school tuition
* Information from Archdiocese that is translated for various ethnic groups
* Programs in helping staff work together
  + Facilitators to help staffs interact
* Liturgy/music ministers meeting more often
  + Office of Liturgy in the Archdiocese has great resources!
* Better organization - who’s bringing communion to whom so that parish outreach can occur
* Leadership development - how to make a good leadership team
* How to address conflict - to get it out there so that we can grow
* Better team mentality/common vision
* Resources in people and materials to do a giving campaign
* More collaboration. Arch bringing leaders across the diocese to network and learn from one another
* More opportunities for specific groups of leaders (ministry leaders) to get together to exchange info
* More hours to do role. Less combined positions to one person. Cobbled positions are a problem. Hard to replace people doing several positions, and no one wants these roles
* High expectations and lofty goals without human resources, hours, and pay to meet them
* Are priests (especially new/young priests) equipped to handle these emerging situations and clusters
* Lots of discussion happened in our group about how supportive the arch staff is, how supportive they are, and the materials they provide
* How can we get younger adults involved?
* Need a director of administrative services - and training for that position
* Formation for parish staff. Staff can’t be “on” all the time. Parishes need to financially support that effort. We need to be affirmed in our work and spiritual life
* Need more help from additional help or volunteerism
* How have we empowered people to take on more responsibility?
* Staff needs to ask for help. Hire people on a limited 10 hour basis - allow it to grow
* Well done conferences like this and last fall!!!
* Continuation of great staff in the archdiocese and growing response of communication
* Support for parishes who are unable to offer certain ministries (i.e. youth ministry, etc.)
* Strength in youth ministry (not just a function of Confirmation)
* Stewardship
* Ongoing training for ministers: how to’s/theology
* United sacramental vision and materials
* Arch should not roll out safeguarding and insurance before they are ready. Be reliable
* Close parishes for days like today - this should be mandatory
* Worthwhile sessions during the workweek
* Communicate the fruits of this session to the whole diocese
* More focused options from the Arch for continued education
* More collaboration between all levels of leadership
* Formation on how to deal with conflict
* Priests that listen, collaborate
* People from the Arch to come out to Dodge County
* Deacons - all formation is here, further out areas don’t want to come here, afraid…
* Online learning needed
* Not being able to get to National Gathering
* Hardware systems - new needed
* Time
* How to preach the social message of the Gospel in an area that is very conservative politically
* Body, Mind and Spirit - opportunities to develop these, retreat, continuing education
* More regional activities sponsored by archdiocesan staff
* More standard - central meeting space, or rotating
* Scholarship assistance for ministry formation
* Develop a broadcast system to calling people to ministry
* Key - support - among staff - among district
* Better discernment process for priests
* Better homiletic training/spiritual leadership
* How do you minister to the different ethnic groups – in the same parish and as parishes change?
* How can we develop various spiritualties on a parish staff/pastoral council level? Making sure that’s part of the training. Training leaders (councils) on how to lead meetings
* Resources aren’t just about money.
* More opportunities to network as lay ministers.
* Parishes are supported in discerning where collaboration can be helpful BEFORE the ARCH tells them to do so; parishes feel encouraged to collaborate before it’s too late
* District meetings are very helpful; DRE meeting, YM meeting, DAS meeting
* B.A.M. Business administrators of the archmil;
* When the archmil holds meetings; have pastors communicate to entire staff, Not just YM coming together. Provide a ARCH gathering for EVERY member of the parish staff; DRE, HR, DAS, reception; different staff members attend arch meetings, but don’t receive specific and relevant training to their parish position
* Trade-specific training gatherings at the arch
* Diocese had loan program; **loan forgiveness program** (incentive for lay ministers)
* Continuing education for lay staff, not just priests, deacons; lay staff won’t feel relevant/effective if they aren’t being continuously formed
* Parish staff, position specific evaluations
* New Director’s Institute
* Parish mission – Rich Harter
* Explore your Archdiocese’s resources
* Resources for cultural diversity in communities – formation programs for immigrants – they want to be a part of their communities (staff to help as well as forming the immigrants)
* Formation for staff --- MORE balance of roles – too many people overworked – too many tasks
* Assure the well-being of each individual: staff, lay ministers, pastors Work/Life Balance
* Volunteers – for staff to mentor relationships
* Models of Contextual Theology (re-educate or new awareness)
* Need support from the Archdiocese in the HR realm
* When it comes to decision making/priorities, to include the hiring/firing of staff
* DAS’ need a voice with the Archbishop
* Increase the training for priests not only in administration but to help them find the charisms that will help them when placed in parishes
* In priest formation to increase training in team building
  + To have the Archdiocese be a conduit and intermediary when conflict arises
  + In addition, to have newly formed priests be open to newer, younger families as they are our FUTURE
* To have priests and laity seen as equals when it comes to decision making in pastoral matters
* Praying and hoping that the staff we have will not be divisive and want to protect and control our kingdoms
* Wise decisions regarding strong staff and pastors trusting their staff to do the work and to lead
* Staff stepping up to do other duties to help out the clergy (take off the load)
* Deacons feel they have good support
* Good thing is if priests can learn to let go of things and control. They will be happier and healthier
* Deacons and staff can be a buffer for priests
* Synod talked about lay leaders being certified. Concern is that it doesn’t prepare us for anything. We would benefit more by formation instead of certification
* People need to participate in formation, but the distance to the Cousins Center is a problem for some
* Music formation gets clumped with liturgy and it is not helpful. Frustrating for the staff who take time to come, but feel they waste their time, as it doesn’t pertain to them
* Staff should not worry about job security. Jobs and descriptions might change but there is plenty of work for all
* Funding is a problem for some parishes. Positions are eliminated because of money, but they are needed
* Lots of baptisms, but no staff to provide programs
* Young families are the future. They are hungry for formation
* Young do not donate money like older people
* Parishes invite confirmation kids to stay active in their faith. Don’t short change your college experience, but remember your faith roots
* Have resources to help draw 24-40 year olds “back to Church”
* Every pastor should have a finance person to handle money/budget/Finance Council
* Focus/utilize resources - including buildings/(Church-other) to reach out/bring in others, or open to those in the neighborhood
* We became (parishes) independent without Archdiocese with bankruptcy
* Let back into working together
* Lost connection - better support
* Question the largeness of the deaneries - the realities are very different
* Archdiocesan best practices
* Who’s doing well - support
* Support and communicate
* Professional organizations
* Online support when physical connection is hard
* Useful - more specific meetings (confirmation). People doing the same thing
* New Directors Program
* Mentoring Program
* Best practices in the country
* Take cluster and build a clear model to replicate it
* Put out successful models, rather than let parishes struggle on the vine
* Instruction/Direction from the diocese
* Collaboration/Clustering can be held up to prevent from working by priests themselves
* Money
* Education
* Archdiocesan support (finance office, HR) - experience of the staff
* Help dealing with conflict as a CORE skill
* Volunteers - could the diocese develop a program to help us find more volunteers
* Developing lay leaders
* “Small Groups” is a model program for developing lay leaders through a personal relationship with Christ
* Praying for people - then asking for their help
* EC = Evangelical Catholic offers and excellent, well organized and supported program. Catholic ID is also a good support, but EC offers a more “personal” approach by being able to personally mentor parish leaders/facilitators
* Developing a personal relationship with Christ through Scripture and the Eucharist is key
* More participation (volunteers, members, etc.)
* Personal touch is key but we know it’s effective - hard to do if it’s not my gift
* Recognize the need to create added value
  + How were you Jesus? Thank you, and follow up and help them see how well it worked out because of them <3
  + Retreats for volunteers - way to help them recognize that their role is important
* I need you to trust me more in the administrative support role - I’m on your side, and I can help!
* Ministers are too busy tasking to take time to ask for help - internal collaboration is there if you ask
* Thank you gatherings were well received
* Need silence, prayer and contemplation as part of the work day alongside all the tasks. Spiritual exercise!
* Make the parish understand the necessities
  + We need a youth minister
  + How to convince older people on the Finance Council, and hiring committee, who don’t understand the need - trust me - I know - please listen to me - I’m the DRE - let me do my job
* Greatness comes from failure. We tend to talk it to death first rather than just jump in. It’s okay to fail, but we’re so worried about what the perception will be if we fail. Let’s just try it
* Lobby first behind the scenes prior to vote - ministry is relational - get them on your side
* Amazing Parish Conference was amazing! Try to participate in it! (St. Charles)
* Admin person from St. Mary’s Hales Corners had great insights
* Can be too many ministries - analyze what is appropriate for your ministry
* Parishioners are engaged enough to assist - willing to help
* Need staff - lost some with merger. The extras really touch the hearts of people
* Give the parishioners/groups the power/authority, what needs to happen. Staff can manage, but parishioners (e.g. a big group) can do it if micromanaged
* Empowerment is valuable - sometimes undercut by priest or administrator
* Can’t get the youth and people involved in the spiritual/ministerial aspect in a rural parish. Will help with physical needs. Challenge to get the youth involved. Need to bring in people who can help such as youth minister
* Hard paradigm shift
* Rethink brick/mortar mentality. We are a missional Church - need to go where the younger people are and how do we go out. Need the relationship
* Consistent communication needed along with education
* We need more gatherings like this at the archdiocese
* How can I be trained is another area? Worry about job being eliminated once merger occurs
* Need to work on pastoral training and development on lay ministers, and vice versa priest receives training on administrative matters. Hopefully results in checks and balances among staff
* Need to have more educational models rather than “vent” sessions at district meetings. Several of us do not attend with our peers because of this
* Offering affordable continuing education for lay ministers integrated into work schedules. Also supporting them through Faith in Our Future funds
* Provide challenging educational opportunities and resources to enable us to move to the next level of quality ministry
* Communication
* Formation of leadership
* Staff community building
* Formation of laity
* Get people involved
* How can we combat social and cultural influences?
* Thinking “outside of the box” to provide faith formation opportunities
* Providing staff for administrative tasks so ministers can focus on parishioners
* How can we provide resources for parishioners to reach out to others?
* How do we provide for priests’ needs? They need vacations too!
* Be available!
* Our biggest mistake (in one opinion) was to close the office of lay formation at the Seminary
* Are all positions such that you need a masters?
* Need to communicate a more holistic approach
* MDI
* An integration from learning about pastoral planning and strategic planning and bring it to the parish level with parishioners
* People who participate feel pulled in directions - how do we address time?
* Ability to help form leaders; engaging more
  + (ex. St. Paul Street Evangelization to coach how to invite and serve, if prog. Missionary to reach out)
  + Different orientations for existing resources
* Focusing on collaboration based on priest shortage; what are the positives from collaborations, with proven statistics, what other areas have done this
* When priests saw this coming - they worked on a collaborative effort
* Care Notes - Abbey Press going out of business, need something new
* Having just wages for lay staff
* When to stop “work” (ministry)
* Every parish staff has a retreat
* Build up community among parish staff
* More from the Archdiocese to come out from the city - everything is held in Milwaukee. It’s hard for staff and parishioners. Have more satellite meetings regionally
  + We feel like we’re on the fringe, and isolated from larger diocese
* Archdiocese needs to maybe force hard decisions, i.e. combine schools that would save the parish $400K - have clusters but then need to support and help with the tough but practical decisions
* Merging and closing is hurtful - need to understand and need time for healing
* Final comments - nice to have an opportunity to discuss what everyone is experiencing